

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCEM-02 INT-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 AID-20

EB-11 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 AGR-20

SR-02 ORM-03 DRC-01 /208 W

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R 141257 SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6594

INFO USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14446

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, ENTRD, TH, EG, SA, KU

SUBJ: THAI APPROACHES TO ARAB WORLD

REF: BANGKOK 18262; B. BANGKOK 18261

SUMMARY: RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES SUGGEST THAT THE RTG IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE ITS STANDING WITH THE ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. THE RTG APPARENTLY PLANS TO GIVE RICE TO THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CENTER IN CAIRO. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN MET WITH THE ELDER SISTER OF EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT SEPTEMBER 8 IN BANGKOK. WE INFER THAT THESE MOVES ARE INTENDED TO PAVE THE WAY FOR CHARTCHAI'S UPCOMING VISIT TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, WHERE, PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN ANNOUNCED, CHARTCHAI WILL EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING CRUDE OIL FROM THE ARAB STATES.

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END SUMMARY.

1. SEDENA EL SADAT, A JOURNALIST ELDER SISTER OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT, MADE A PREVIOUSLY UNANNOUNCED 24-HOUR STOP IN BANGKOK AT THE START OF A SWING THROUGH ASIA WITH TWO OTHER JOURNALISTS AND MOSTAFA GHONEIM FROM THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN PROMPTLY HOSTED A LUNCHEON FOR THE GROUP SEPTEMBER 8, DURING WHICH BOTH SIDES MADE REFERENCE TO STRENGHTENING TIES BETWEEN THAILAND AND EGYPT.

2. "INFORMED SOURCES" SEPTEMBER 9 SAID THAT CHARTCHAI PLANNED TO DONATE RICE TO THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CENTER IN CAIRO. THE GESTURE WOULD BE IN APPRECIATION FOR THE NON-VIOLENT SOLUTION TO THE BLACK SEPTEMBER OCCUPATION OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY BANGKOK LAST DECEMBER (REFS A AND B).

3. COMMENT: THIS RICE DONATION IS NOT AN UNSOLICITED RTG ACT, BUT IS THE RTG DONATION TO THE UN RELIEF AND WORKS AGREEMENT (UNRWA). THE RTG IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO GET SOME PROPAGANDA MILEAGE IN EGYPT, AND ELSEWHERE, OUT OF THIS YEAR'S CONTRIBUTION. FURTHERMORE, THE RTG IS PAVING THE WAY FOR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI'S UPCOMING TRIP TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. HE IS SCHEDULED TO BE IN CAIRO SEPTEMBER 15 TO 19 AND IN JIDDA FROM SEPTEMBER 19 TO 21.

4. PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 12 THAT CHARTCHAI HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS AN ARRANGEMENT TO TRADE THAI PARBOILED RICE FOR ARAB CRUDE OIL. THANOM SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT HAD ALREADY APPROACHED THE THAI ABOUT BUYING RICE. THE RTG HAS LATELY BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING PRICE OF OIL. PRIME MINISTER THANOM'S ANNOUNCEMENT CONFIRMS RECENT RUMORS THAT THE RTG WOULD SEEK SOME ARRANGEMENT WITH A MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRY TO TRADE RICE FOR OIL.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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